

CRACKLIN' STATIC



Serving the Amateur Radio Community since April 16, 1968
<http://www.snars.org>

RENO, NEVADA

SUMMER 2021

FIELD DAY 2021 SPECIAL EDITION

This special Field Day edition of CRACKLIN' STATIC contains no President's Voice, no masthead, no minutes or technical articles, calendars, etc., just the story and photos of SNARS normal Field Day at Washoe Lake, and individual SNARS members' Field Day 2021, (the ARRL allowed D class stations to work everyone again with COVID still around), and the people who made it happen. No official stuff, just FD! Read on, and enjoy! And, if you didn't send me anything on YOUR Field Day, and would like to have your efforts published, send them to me, and I'll include them in subsequent issues of the regular Cracklin Static. And MAKE SURE you send your info for Field Day into the ARRL by 2059Z July 27, so it will be included in the SNARS Aggregate totals. On many photos I've included the photographer's call sign.....73, Howie WB2AWQ

SNARS FIELD DAY 2021 WASHOE LAKE STATE PARK

FIELD DAY WRAP-UP by Jim Shepherd W6US, FD Coordinator

It was amazing to see the parking lot almost full with vehicles when I pulled in midday Friday. We had lots of help show up to help with the setup of the site. After a quick meeting, W7VD



and KJ7HMY headed to Costco and Smith's with the shopping lists to get the groceries for the weekend. Everyone else was involved in helping raising antennas and setting up stations. KD8SMH was busy setting up the kitchen area. A whole bunch of hams were helping KM6DZ put together his 40-10 meter Mosley beam and getting it 40' into the air.



After the groceries arrived and were properly stored, we started prep for dinner. We had hamburgers with all the fixin's, corn on the cob, and potato salad for the 14 people on site. The rest of the evening was spent getting on the air and visiting with old friends. At about 9, I started the sous vide system to cook the Tri Tip for Saturday night's dinner. Saturday morning started early with the smell of freshly brewed coffee, and joined shortly with the smells of bacon and sausage. Country fries and eggs cooked to order were served to the workers along with fresh fruit.

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More people started arriving and the final setup of the generator system and other equipment was completed.

N7JDM ran a class on installing crimp-on UHF connectors on RG58 coax which provided us with jumpers for the bandpass filters.



W6US



W7DBE

A quick meeting with the station captains discussed getting all interested operators on the air for some contacts and the use of the N1MM+ logging program.

Just as the starting time arrived, we experienced a network failure, so each station was on its own. Fortunately, no logging was lost, and we were able to avoid duplicate contacts.

15 meters was slow, but W7DBE was able to make some good contacts on SSB.



KF7KTC



KF7KTC

AE5CA was on SSB on 20 meters making lots of contacts.



KF7KTC

KE7VSR was hammering out SSB contacts on 40.



N7ROJ

N7ROJ was doing 40 meter FT8 using 100% solar power.



W6US

W6US was on 20 meter FT8 and FT4.



W7SSB

KM6DZ was pounding the brass on 40 meter CW and racking up the score.

Lunch was served with build-your-own sandwiches and other goodies. Throughout the entire event, cold bottled water, Gatoraid, and assorted sodas were available as well as tea and coffee. During the afternoon, lots of other hams and 3 junior ops took turns at the radios and made contacts.



KF7KTC

AE6CA coaching one of his three grand-daughters making an SSB contact

Since this was the first major in-person event, there was a lot of socializing between old and new friends. The weather was good with just enough breeze to cut the heat.



W6US

SNARS Public Information booth

At about 6 pm, the kitchen started working on dinner. KD8SMH, KJ7HMY and his wife Courtney, KJ7IRS, KJ7IRT, KF7KTC, and W6US went to work and about 7 pm, a big dinner of Tri Tip, ranch beans, green salad, potato and pasta salads, corn-on-the-cob, garlic bread, and cookies/brownie bits for dessert was served to about forty hungry hams and visitors. It was well received.

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KF7KTC

Operations continued until well after midnight and moved to mostly 80 and 40 meters. There were sporadic operations later on as operators woke up and made a few contacts before returning to bed.



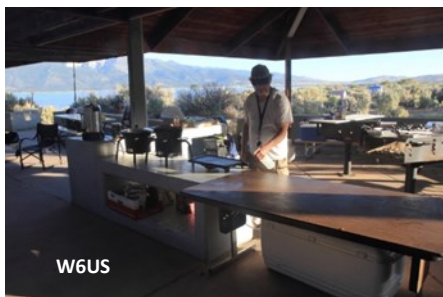
Daughter and 2 granddaughters of AE6CA



W7DBE's Go-Box, one very cool setup!

Daylight came early and everyone was back on the air. The little bit of left over Tri Tip was diced up and added to the country potatoes to make a hash, and with to-order eggs, bacon and sausage made for a great breakfast.

George, KD8SMH sanitizing the kitchen counter before making Sunday breakfast.



W6US

Operations continued until 11 am when we shut down the generators, and started breaking down the site. At 3 pm, the last vehicle left the site and headed home.

W7DBE's 80-6 meter vertical



W7SSB

W7SSB demos a Chameleon TDL (Tactical Delta Loop). Don also supplied the Chameleon F Loop (magloop) used by N7ROJ



W7DBE

In total, there were 304 contacts made by the operators. 54 sections were contacted across the US and Canada. There were 129 digital contacts, 48 CW contacts, and 127 contacts made on SSB. During the weekend 60 people were signed in on our site log. The final score claimed is 962 QSO points, and 1510 bonus points for a total of 2472 points. The bonus points were for: 100% emergency power (7x), Public place, Info booth, Media Publicity, Natural Power, Educational activity, Youth Element (60), submit via web, Safety Officer, Social Media. All the possible bonus points are outlined in the ARRL Field Day packet.

MORE COMMENTARY FROM SNARS (W7TA) FIELD DAY

Jon Fox KF7KTC (photos by Jon!)

FOOD

Supper was served Friday night, with charcoal grilled hamburgers being the main dish. On Saturday, there were three of us that cooked breakfast, with fresh eggs cooked to order, country potatoes and onions, hickory smoked bacon, sausage, and oatmeal on the menu. Fresh apples and bananas were also available. A few dishes of cinnamon-oat French toast were served, and received high praises. For lunch, cold cuts of pastrami, ham, bologna, and several varieties of cheese were laid out, to be made into sandwiches on whole grain or sourdough bread.

The crowning meal served was supper on Saturday night. There was a larger kitchen crew to do most of the hard



Some of the cooking crew



work this year. The meal was sous vide prepared tri-tip grilled over a charcoal fire, fresh mixed greens salad with tomatoes, boiled sweet corn, ranch beans, potato salad, pasta salad, and baked garlic french bread.



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Breakfast on Sunday included fresh scrambled eggs, pancakes, country potatoes and onions, hickory smoked bacon, sausage and oatmeal. Fresh fruit was available. It was pretty busy for the cooking crew, even with 3+ of us working. But we got the job done, and everyone seemed happy with the meals.

OPERATIONS

Radio operations were conducted using the modes of CW (continuous wave - in Morse Code), SSB (single side-band) and digital (computer to computer messaging using radio signals). Operators included even young children, as some visitors included families with youngsters. Power sources were gasoline generators and solar cells. Everyone that attended had a very enjoyable experience. There were about 24 members that actively worked the operations from Friday night through Sunday morning. On Saturday there were upwards of 60 people that attended the event, including visitors.



W7TA at the main pavilion, Washoe Lake State Park

John Byerly, N7ROJ (photos by John!)

Digital FD Station was as follows:

PowerFilm Solar LightSaver MAX 20AH battery pack with integrated rollable solar panel. Additionally, a Bioenno Power 28 watt additional foldable solar panel was used. Powering Xiegu G90 transceiver. Digital interface was DigiRig portable V1.5. Computer MS SurfaceBook running FLRIG 1.40, WSJT-X 2.40. Antenna is Chameleon Antennas F-Loop 2.0 with solid aluminum radiator. Operated 40 meters digital FT-8 and JS8CALL. 78 contacts.



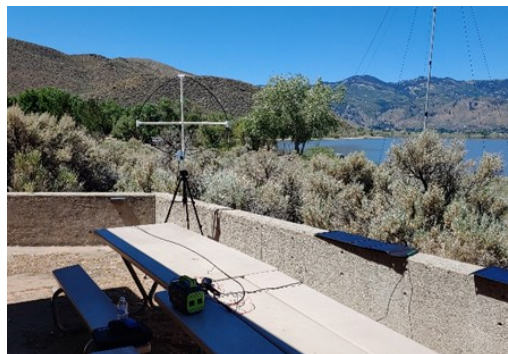
The Chameleon F Loop 2.0 magloop antenna, with solid aluminum radiator

SNARS Prez John N7ROJ's "serious" FD station



Fun station:

Bioenno Power BPP160 LiFePO4 pack with 28 watt foldable solar panel powering LAB599 Discovery TX-500 QRP HF/6M radio. Antenna is Doxytronics Signaloop HF-319 Magnetic loop antenna. Operated for fun and to let people play with the radio to see the utility of QRP, Solar, and magnetic loop antennas.



Had a great Saturday. Migraine put me in the emergency room Sunday. It was impressive to see all the people who came to visit, operate, help, and eat great food. Kudos to everyone and Jim Shepherd for putting it all together.

Don Sherman W7SSB (photos by Don!)

Things don't change in 5 years.....The Agony of QRM 2016 and 2021! (Peter KE7VSR disgusted with interference on 40 SSB.....)



SNARS MEMBERS' INDIVIDUAL FIELD DAY OPERATIONS

GREG – KG7D (ALL PHOTOS FROM GREG!)

EDITOR'S NOTE: This operation actually involved four operators, all of whom ran independently as 1B: KG7D, K6CZH, KG7QXE, AND NU6O

As we rolled onto the lake bed, the sky was black over Austin and we could see lighting in the distance. Only a few rain drops had wet our windshield as we passed through the valley. The temp was cool and white clouds passed over head. Good thing we had tomorrow to setup the antenna. Shortly after my arrival the usual suspects started rolling in.



Dark skies over Austin....

The next day, to quote Tom Waits, "Well, the dawn cracked hard just like a bullwhip 'Cause it wasn't taking no lip from the night before". It was a beautiful morning, and a perfect time to get the antenna in the air. In a couple of hours a cool breeze will feel good, but it doesn't help putting antenna up.

Everyone got their stations set up, tested, and for the most part, was ready to go by Friday afternoon. Our group consists of mainly experienced operators.



Camp KG7D



Camp K6CZH

Each having their own equipment and working under their own call sign. The best part of the lake bed is the size. We spread out with over 500' between camps. This pretty much eliminates interference between stations.



Camp KG7QXE



Camp NU6O

Saturday morning we all had our coffee, something to eat and made any last minute adjustments. The first hour of any contest or QSO party is always a mess. So we spend the first few minutes working everyone in camp on 2m FM, 70cm



Greg KG7D and Wes KG7QXE



Subrina KI7OAL assisted KG7D

FM, 2m SSB, and then moved to 10m SSB. We could have went up and down the bands and modes, but that had been a good enough warm up. This also had served to get the less experienced ops on the radio. KJ6IBX hadn't

planned on working the radio, but it's good for everyone to make a few contacts. After that everyone moved to the mode of their choice and started making contacts. I made a handful of Phone contacts, but soon got bored. I turned up the stereo and moved to PSK.



Erik K6CZH working phone



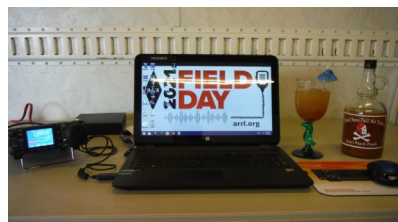
Wes KG7QXE working phone

After about an hour I need to stretch my legs so I headed off to check on the other's. Wes - KG7QXE was working Phone, Erik - K6CZH was on another band also working phone, and Joe - NU6O had FT-8 going strong. Throughout the afternoon and evening, I'd see the guys out

stretching their legs, or they'd pop their head in my camper to say "Hi". I worked a little more Phone and PSK. Then just before sunset, I headed out on the dirt bike. Took a look around the entire lake bed, I'm always looking for a better place to



Joe NU6O working FT8



KG7D working the elixir....

camp, and then over to the hot springs. The water was warm but nice. I don't know how late everyone stayed up working the radios.

It was pretty much the same Sunday morning. Once

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11:00am came around, everyone was out walking, stretching and enjoying the sun.

KI7OAL enjoy-
ing the spa....



The BBQ: For the last few years we've had a BBQ potluck on Saturday evening. We all have a big meal, and a glass or two of *Greg's Magic QSO Enhancing Elixir*, and no one ever makes it back to the radios. It turns into an early night for everyone. This year I thought it might work out better to have the BBQ on Sunday afternoon.

At the BBQ I handed out a couple of prizes. Mainly for the usual stuff. However, this year I saw something that caught my eye. Although it wasn't strictly a radio related thing, camping is a huge part of Field Day and radio in general. Our friend Becky – KJ6IBX was given a prize for the coolest camping gadget. Her solar oven! It was really interesting, worked really well, and also had a high cool factor. I'd watched her cook all weekend with it, and everything smelled fantastic! Becky even cooked the potato's for the BBQ with her solar oven.



After a couple hours of quaffing, gorging, and tales of contacts made, lost, or other wise, we disbanded to start our break down. Radio's stowed for travel, coax wiped clean and rolled, masts brought down and bagged, all ready for our next adventure. As the sun rose Monday morning we finished loading and headed back home.



We all worked under our own call signs. Each of us 1-B NV. All of us were using our own batteries and solar panels. In total the group made right at 700 contacts, I didn't work the radio much. I mainly enjoyed the day, took photos, and was the chef. There are other radio events I prefer to work. *7th Area QP is one of my favorite.* I enjoy putting on the event and making sure everyone else has a good time for Field Day. I did manage to make 130 SSB and PSK contacts, while Joe-NU6O made 300 FT-8 contacts, Erik - K6CZH made right at 200 SSB, and Wes - KG7QXE was around 75 SSB contacts.

Due to unforeseen family obligations, a few of our usual gang couldn't join us. We all missed you and we're all looking forward seeing you next year.

Howie and Ken WB2AWQ

Howie and Ken ran 2D from WB2AWQ's house due to an ongoing medical situation. Photos from WB2AWQ, KB2SFS, and Tamsen Carson

We started on time, stopped on time! First time ever that we finished at the end, usually we're worn out and the bands are lousy, so we give up early.

Bands were in and out, 15 in particular. I ran 40 and 15, bounced back and forth between the two as QRM got to me on 40 from

someone's solar panel charger, I would go to 15 and see if any new stations appeared. Got 19 stations on 15, all on Saturday. Did not try 15 on Sunday.

Ken worked 20 using a mag loop and his IC-718.



KB2SFS working 20M CW from WB2AWQ

We had Junior Op Elliot join us for a while. He likes to see Grandpa's tankless water heater, and listen to the code on his receivers. We never discourage him!



WB2AWQ on 40 CW. Note the computer, normally a stranger to my shack.

Ken stayed with 20 until dinner time. We enjoyed a nice BBQ of steaks, corn on the cob, and salads with my XYL. Back to the radios, we switched to the 80/40 routine. At first we tried Ken on 80, me on 40, not very good. Getting interference both ways, unlike last year when we had no interference either way. We switched, me on 80. Tried

both the Yaesu, which had zero interference last year, and my TS-440S. The TS was a bit better, but still not very good. We sort of struggled along, one laying low if the other had a contact. Ken left around 1 AM, so I had the bands to myself. I worked both 40 and 80 mostly 40, till around 2 AM when I crapped out for a couple hours. Gotta work on that interference.....

Came back out at 4 AM, did 80 mostly, then switched to 40 as the sun rose (along with the solar panel noise!), but I persevered. Interesting sidelight: Got a text notice that the International Space Station would be passing nearly overhead at 4:32 AM, so I took a few minutes to watch it go over. It was a classic crystal clear morning, and the ISS passed very close visually to Jupiter making for a spectacular sight. They were both very bright. Back to the radios. I broke again at 6 AM for a couple hours sleep after getting us to 475 Q's. Ken came back around 9 AM, I went back out at 10:15, and we finished up with 502 Q's. 40 meters was, as usual, the workhorse band, being good enough even with the solar panel noise to be usable during the day, and of course it sparkled at night. 20 meters, had it been open the full 24 hours might have done better, but it was pretty good much of the time. 80 was fair in the early evening, but better in the 4 AM period till sunrise. 15 was, at least, open for some of the time. Good to hear.

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For antennas, we had all stealth antennas: a 20 meter home made mag loop sitting just 3 ft off the ground at the bottom, a 40 meter end-fed half wave up 14 ft, an 80 meter dipole sitting 7 ft high on a fence, and a 30/15 meter end-fed at 11 ft.

One note: I had lent my keyer and paddles (which I rarely use) to a SNARS member who wanted to join the CW Academy on the air. I did not want to ask for them back just for FD, so I made a quickie base and support for a Bulldog mini paddle which I used to use for mobile CW work back in NJ, and ran it from the keyer



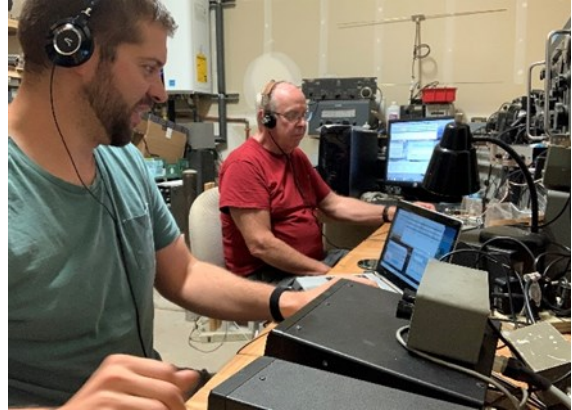
circuit in an old MFJ-9020 20M QRP transceiver I have. I had to pull one of the chips to disable the transmit portion of the MFJ, but the keyer worked well, and needed no particular ad-

aptation to mate with my TS-440S. Nonetheless, I used a Vibroplex Original Deluxe bug for most of my CW work. I'm comforta-

ble either way, so the choice of bug or paddle was not an issue for me.

Ken KB2SFS

Dad (WB2AWQ) and I made the tough decision to work from home again this Field Day. We remained on the listen for W7TA, but working such a highly desired QSO did not come to fruition. The bands held their own as we were hitting the east coast fairly easily. Minus any small breaks, I believe we made it until around 2am before one of us had to take a break. While we both ended up needing some beauty sleep, this was the first Field Day in 27 years we've been doing FD together that we continued to work until the last second possible.



Howie and Ken running the bands

WHAT, YOU'RE NOT IN HERE???

If you did Field Day, with SNARS, or on your own, and you'd like your exploits to be published in Cracklin' Static, send me a writeup, pictures, whatever you have and I'll publish them in the next issues of our newsletter.

Send to: WB2AWQ@arrl.net